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Publications Review Board

"Helping You Honor the Oath"

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(U) PRB Timelines

Posted on **February 6, 2015**

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(U//**SI**) Here in the PRB we are no strangers to deadlines. Per regulations, the PRB's standard timetable for completing reviews is no longer than 30 days. We do, however, understand that there are often circumstances where documents need to be reviewed in much shorter time frames and on short notice, for example, final papers, essay exams, obituaries, or blog posts for a class. Most of the time we're able to accommodate these

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reasonable requests, but we also want to provide a framework for understanding the many factors that impact the time table of the prepublication review process.

(U) A while back, the Intelink blog EDITINT published some very insightful posts about the speed (and perceived lack thereof) of editing – Why does editing take so long? and How fast can you edit? The most common myths about editing are also applicable to the PRB process. So here I've re-hashed [redacted] thoughts with some added insight into why prepublication review takes time.

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(U) Reviewers read every word. Multiple times.

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(U) Prepublication review isn't just a mindless rubber stamp that we apply for the sake of bureaucracy. The process exists to protect both the Agency and its employees by safeguarding classified information. The PRB's review is a multi-tiered process, meaning that multiple people carefully read and re-read your document. While some submissions are only a few paragraphs, many are hundreds of pages long. With the huge variety of factors involved in a single review (such as work history, cover, contracts, length, level of detail, etc.) it is extremely difficult to make time estimates on individual cases, let alone assure they are completed quickly. And reading is only the first step.

(U) Reviewers research the best solution to a problem.

(U) Not only is the body of the Agency's equity so massive and diverse that no individual person or existing database can accurately and comprehensively contain it (at least for now), but (despite all those pesky WBTs) individuals aren't perfect in their classification decisions. After initially reading a submission, the PRB's reviewers do extensive research and consult with subject matter experts on the text's content to determine if any information merits protection. This often involves coordination with other offices or IC agencies.

(U) Reviewers have other projects.

(U) The PRB receives *hundreds* of submissions every month. Alas, we do not have a staff of hundreds of people. At any given time, there are dozens of cases already in process. The next time you submit something with an urgent same-day deadline, be aware that we're already working on other cases, many with similarly urgent deadlines. Understand that while the PRB exists to serve you, individual reviewers are not exclusively working on your documents alone. In addition to conducting reviews, PRB staff have other obligations just like everyone else – meetings, training, giving briefings, taking leave. And while the PRB only operates Monday-Friday, our inbox is open 24/7, so we're often playing catch-up.

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(U) Bottom line: Make sure to give your document time!

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